U.S. Trade with Sub-Saharan Africa, January-December 2009

U.S. total trade with Sub-Saharan Africa (exports plus imports) decreased by 40.7 percent in 2009, as both exports and imports declined. The fall-off in trade continued to track the overall decline in U.S. trade with the world (a 27.4 percent decline in 2009) resulting from the current global economic and financial crisis. U.S. exports decreased by 18.1 percent to $15.1 billion, with decreases in a variety of sectors including machinery, vehicles and parts, wheat and other grains, non-crude oil, and aircraft. Of the top five African destinations for U.S. products, exports to Kenya rose by 47.9 percent (due to an increase of aircraft, fertilizers, and cereals exports) and to Ghana by 4.3 percent. Exports to South Africa decreased by 31.3 percent, to Nigeria by 10.9 percent, and to Angola by 29.6 percent.

U.S. imports in 2009 decreased by 45.5 percent to $46.9 billion. This decline was mostly due to a 47.3 percent fall in crude oil imports (accounting for 95.8 percent of total imports from Sub-Saharan Africa) with both price and quantity declining. Imports from all the major oil producing countries decreased; imports from Nigeria decreased by 50 percent, from Angola by 50.6 percent, from the Republic of Congo by 38.8 percent, from Chad by 40.5 percent, and from Gabon by 46 percent. U.S. imports from South Africa continued to show a sharp decline of 40.9 percent, driven mainly by declines in the import of platinum, diamonds, passenger vehicles, and ferroalloys.

AGOA imports were $33.7 billion in 2009, 49 percent less than in 2008 mainly due to a 50 percent decline in AGOA petroleum product imports.[1] Petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports with an 89.9 percent share. With these fuel products excluded, AGOA imports were $3.4 billion, decreasing by 33.4 percent. AGOA minerals and metals fell by 67 percent, energy-related products by 50 percent, chemical and related products by 38 percent, transportation equipment by 25 percent, and textiles and apparel imports by 19 percent. Only AGOA agricultural products grew by 16 percent. The top five AGOA beneficiary countries included Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Chad, and the Republic of Congo. Other leading AGOA beneficiaries included Gabon, Lesotho, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Kenya.

The U.S. merchandise trade deficit with Sub-Saharan Africa decreased from $67.5 billion in 2008 to $31.8 billion in 2009, due to a 40.6 percent decrease in total trade between the U.S. and Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria, Angola, the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea accounted for 92 percent of the total U.S. trade deficit with Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009, with Nigeria alone accounting for 45 percent.

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[1] Note that AGOA imports are imports for consumption, while all other import figures are general imports. Imports for consumption include only those goods as they enter the U.S. economy for consumption. General imports include all goods as they cross the U.S. border, including those destined for bonded warehouses or foreign trade zones.

Prepared by: S. J. Loucif
U.S. Department of Commerce
International Trade Administration
Market Access & Compliance/Office of Africa